



Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching (Hebrews 10:19-25).

This section of scripture is describing God's plan for your vibrant life. In his commentary on Hebrews, FF Bruce says that "this section of scripture provides the practical implications of all that has been accomplished for us by Christ." Those practical implications can translate themselves into a vibrant life.

- A life filled with purpose
- A life filled with meaningful relationships
- A life freed of pointless business
- A life that's characterized by grace instead of harshness
- A life that's like Jesus

Isn't that what all of us want?

Today we're going to cover how each of us can experience this: God's plan for your vibrant life. To get us started, this vibrant life is only possible for VIPs.

Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, (verses 19-21).

This VIP access is given to brothers and sisters; the local church is being addressed here—men and women who have placed their faith in Jesus as the Savior and Lord of the universe. They confidently enter the "Most Holy Place," a reference to the Holy of Holies in the Old Testament temple. The very presence of God. We have the privilege to confidently enter the presence of God "by the blood of Jesus." It is only by this that a person is given

access to this very exclusive and separate place. That's where I get the idea that this is for VIPs. More about that in a moment...

Verse 20 describes this new life we live as made possible through the body of Jesus. We enter this exclusive place through Jesus' body just like the priests in the Old Testament entered the Holy of Holies by passing through a curtain. And verse 21 provides the detail that Jesus, the one who grants us access to the VIP area, is also functioning as the high priest, the leader of this gathering that he's assembling.

Ponder for a moment the privileged access Jesus is giving. He is granting any follower of his full and confident access to the holy presence of God. Wow! When was the last time you were given access to an exclusive experience?

When I lived in Hermosa Beach Cassie and I were invited to a Laker game. We were going to sit in player Kurt Rambis' seats and access to the Wachovia Room was included too. I didn't know what the Wachovia Room was. We got there early. I just wanted to sit down, get a hot dog and watch some basketball. Our friends kept pestering us to get there early. Finally we relented and arrived a little bit early.

We were walking toward our seats, getting closer and closer to center court when my phone rings. My friend instructs me to walk down to the court... We enter the Wachovia Room and I immediately realize what an idiot I'd been! I should have arrived hours earlier! There was a huge buffet of gourmet food. The room was full of famous people—Andy Garcia, Jack Nicholson, Cameron Diaz, Toby McGuire, Bill O'Reilly. Upon my own merits, I didn't belong in this room. I didn't have the money. I wasn't famous. But I had full and equal VIP access because Kurt Rambis gave me his ticket.

Jesus gives his children even better VIP access.

Therefore, brothers and sisters, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, (verses 19–21).

We need the constant reminder that we have this VIP access because it's human nature to focus on our junk; our failures; our inadequacies. Jesus did not give us access to God's presence so we could continually wonder if we belong there. You do belong there because **he** belongs there and **he** gave you access. Brennan

Manning wrote, "Define yourself radically as one beloved by God. This is the true self. Every other identity is illusion."

Because of this VIP access that Jesus has given his followers, there are three actions that naturally follow in these verses.

- **Draw Near to God**
- **Hold to Hope**
- **Spur One Another On**

When we put these three actions together with full, confident access to God's presence, I believe we live the vibrant life God designed for each of us. Let's look at these actions. The first one is to Draw Near to God.

... let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water (v. 22).

As a result of this amazing VIP access Jesus has given us, draw near to God with confidence. Our faith should generate "full assurance." What does this look like?

When Aidan was 6 years old he and I were having a conversation as I was leaving the house for work.

Dad: "See you later, Aidan. I'm going to work."

Aidan: "Sometimes you work all day." (I think he meant sometimes I work until after his bedtime. The two nights previous were like this.)

Dad: "Yes. But do you know what my favorite time of the day is? When I come home to you."

Aidan: "Me too. Actually, it's when you get home and I run out to the Mustang and open your door for you."

Dad: "I love that too."

My simple 4-word response expressed all the love I had for my son. I had given him full VIP access to my life and my heart. I wanted him to draw near to me with full confidence. And when he ran to my car, opened my door with no thought except "my dad is here," my heart swelled with satisfaction.

We have no reason to doubt the legitimacy of our spot in God's presence. We have no reason to hold back giving all of our hearts to him. But we do, don't we?

It's like God knows our tendency to forget and doubt so he reminds us again that we belong in his presence by saying our guilty conscience and bodies have been cleansed. He's saying, "Don't forget your VIP access. Draw near to God with full assurance."

Make no mistake, not just anyone can draw near to God. But for the person whose heart has been made pure by Jesus he is granted full access. Why not open your heart to God and tell him that you want to draw near to him?

This is the first action that's part of God's plan for your vibrant life. The second action is to Hold to Hope.

Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful (v. 23).

As a result of this amazing VIP access Jesus has given us and the intimate relationship with have with God, we are instructed to hold unswervingly to hope. This is not a casual grip.

Have you been watching *American Ninja Warrior* this summer? The athletes have crazy strong grip strength. They don't just do pull-ups. They do the Salmon Ladder. They don't just climb monkey bars. They grip small items like doorknobs in order to cross over the water. They are holding unswervingly. I know you've wondered, How long could I hold on? How far could I go?

I have a pull-up bar in my garage so I tried it out this past week. I wanted to know, "how good am I at holding on?" So I tried it out. Then Cassie tried it. She is better than me! You know why? She's developed greater grip strength through climbing aerial silks.

We're being told here to hold onto the hope of salvation and Jesus' return like that. To hold and keep holding and tenaciously grit it out when everything else is telling us to just let go. And just like our physical grip strength can be strengthened, so can our spiritual grip strength. **"Like newborn babies, crave pure spiritual milk, so that by it you may grow up in your salvation"** (1 Peter 2:2).

How's your grip strength? Are you experiencing the vibrant life God designed for you with ever increasing spiritual grip strength?

Built upon the foundation of our VIP access and God's unconditional love the first action that's part of God's plan for your vibrant life is to Draw Near to God. The second action is to Hold to Hope. The third action is to Spur One Another On.

And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching (verses 24–25).

At this point in our verses for today the "we" aspect becomes a flashing light. We, We, We, We. So far, there have been 13 plural references in these 7 verses. This vibrant life God has designed for us is not experienced in isolation but instead within Biblical community. It looks like spurring one another on to love and good deeds.

There are lots of ways that our friends, neighbors, family or co-workers spur us on. You might be spurred on to keep your grass green or let your grass turn brown. In this case, we are being spurred on to love and good deeds because this is the byproduct of our first action—drawing near to God. When we are near God, he changes us to become more and more like him. And he is love and good deeds.

Two ways of spurring one another on are given:

1. Keep meeting together. As beneficial as social media might be, it can't replace the power of being in someone's presence—worshipping together on Sundays; gathering together to study God's Word and talk about it; a mission trip like the recent Honduras trip; gathering together to serve others in Street Church or Backyard Bible Camp or Student Ministries; doing a prayer walk; morning coffee—anytime God's people gather together to talk about their lives and talk about God's truth.
2. Encouraging one another. Encouragement looks like a hug when you're down, a listening ear, positive words spoken. All these combine to give support. When someone is encouraging you, you feel supported.

Years ago I attended a fundraiser called Dinner in the Dark. The people who attend the event are visually healthy but the event is conducted in a near blackout room to immerse us into the life of someone who's blind. It was a fascinating experience. The choir of all-blind people was my favorite.

They entered the room in a people train. Each person putting hands on the shoulders of the person in front of them. When that person moved, they moved. When they stopped they all stopped and bunched together. They touched a lot!

The people train exhibited group ethics. No one was an individual stand out. The train moved slowly to ensure that no one was left behind. In fact, arriving with only part of the group would have been a disaster! Those left behind would truly have been lost in a hallway somewhere.

Their obvious need reveals to me how needy I am too. I know I can't make it alone, yet sometimes I distance myself. Jean, our

server for the night, was partially impaired. She said she would not have a corrective surgery to improve her eyesight if advancements came. We asked her why. She said she doesn't want to lose her drive to help others.

All the servers and the choir knew they needed help from one another because their impairment was so obvious, so obvious they couldn't live life alone. Brothers and sisters, our impairments are different but no less impactful to living a vibrant God-centered life.

God has designed us to live in a people chain. Holding on to one another and giving the reassurance "I'm with you. You're not alone." Slowing down when someone trips. Reminding one another when we forget our VIP access to God's presence. Cheering someone on to hold on to hope. We need one another next to us, telling us we can endure more than our minds are telling us. Because we forget that our source of everything is drawing near to God.

God designed his people to function interdependently on one another. If you are too busy to live this way, you are too busy. Sign up for something. Get involved. Contribute.

The question each of us should consider is this: What can I do for my church?

God has called you here, at this specific place, at this specific time. He's called you here for a reason. And I guarantee you, it's not just for you to receive. It's to receive from him, receive from one another, and to give.

This manuscript represents the bulk of what was preached at CPC. For further detail, please refer to the audio recording of this sermon.

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